



General Assembly

January Session, 2007

Committee Bill No. 872

LCO No. 5550

05550SB00872ENV

Referred to Committee on Environment

Introduced by:
(ENV)

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FARMLAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2007*) (a) There is established a
2 Farmland Preservation Advisory Board, within the Department of
3 Agriculture for administrative purposes only, to assist and advise the
4 Commissioner of Agriculture in carrying out the provisions of sections
5 22-26aa to 22-26kk, inclusive, of the general statutes.

6 (b) The advisory board shall consist of twelve members as follows:
7 A representative from The University of Connecticut Cooperative
8 Extension Service, appointed by the Governor to serve an initial term
9 of two years; a representative from the Connecticut Farm Bureau, who
10 may be an owner and operator of a Connecticut farm and shall be
11 appointed by the Governor to serve an initial term of three years; five
12 owners and operators of Connecticut farms, who shall be appointed as
13 follows: One by the Governor, one by the president pro tempore of the
14 Senate, one by the speaker of the House of Representatives, one by the
15 majority leader of the Senate, and one by the majority leader of the
16 House of Representatives, to serve initial terms of three years; a

17 representative from the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station,
18 appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, to serve an initial term
19 of two years; a representative from the Connecticut Conference of
20 Municipalities, appointed by the minority leader of the House of
21 Representatives, to serve an initial term of two years; a representative
22 from an organization whose mission includes farmland preservation,
23 who may be an owner and operator of a Connecticut farm and who
24 shall be appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate to serve
25 an initial term of two years; a representative from an organization
26 whose mission includes food security, appointed by the speaker of the
27 House of Representatives to serve an initial term of two years; and a
28 representative from a financial lending organization whose clients
29 include owners and operators of Connecticut farms, appointed by the
30 Governor to serve an initial term of two years. The members of the
31 board shall select a chairperson from among the board members who
32 are owners and operators of Connecticut farms. Upon the expiration of
33 the terms of the initial members, the terms of such members shall be
34 three years. A person appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the
35 unexpired term of such vacancy. Any member may be eligible for
36 reappointment.

37 (c) Upon establishment of the advisory board and selection of a
38 chairperson pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, the board: (1)
39 Shall meet publicly with said commissioner and the staff of the
40 purchase of development rights program within the Department of
41 Agriculture at least once every two months to review the ongoing
42 activities of the program, (2) shall evaluate and provide comments and
43 recommendations on the purchase of development rights transaction
44 process, including, but not limited to, methods for streamlining the
45 process and appropriate levels of staffing and funding, methods for
46 increased participation by municipalities and farmers, methods of
47 planning for future acquisitions and identifying prime land for
48 preservation, and outreach strategies to be conducted by program staff
49 to the state-wide farming community, targeted towards attracting a
50 greater number of quality applications, (3) may recommend any other

51 changes to the program deemed appropriate by the board, including
 52 recommendations for future legislative action, and (4) shall evaluate
 53 and provide comments on the efficacy of the method of bond funding
 54 established pursuant to section 2 of this act.

55 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2007*) Notwithstanding section 3-20 of
 56 the general statutes, to the extent there is a sufficient balance of bonds
 57 approved by the General Assembly pursuant to any bond act for the
 58 purposes of agricultural land preservation programs established
 59 pursuant to section 22-26cc or 22-26jj of the general statutes, but not
 60 allocated by the State Bond Commission, said commission shall
 61 authorize the issuance of at least five million dollars of such bonds for
 62 the purposes described in said sections at each of said commission's
 63 regularly scheduled meetings occurring in August and February of
 64 each year. If no meeting is held in said months, said commission shall
 65 authorize the issuance of such bonds at its next regularly scheduled
 66 meeting. To the extent there is a sufficient balance of bonds so
 67 approved by the General Assembly and there are pending agricultural
 68 land preservation transactions in excess of five million dollars, the
 69 Commissioner of Agriculture may request, and the State Bond
 70 Commission shall authorize the issuance of, bonds in excess of five
 71 million dollars. To the extent the balance of bonds so approved by the
 72 legislature is below five million dollars at the time of said
 73 commission's August or February meetings, said commission shall
 74 authorize the issuance of the remaining balance of such bonds.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2007</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2007</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To establish and fund a Farmland Preservation Advisory Board.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]

Co-Sponsors: SEN. WILLIAMS, 29th Dist.

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